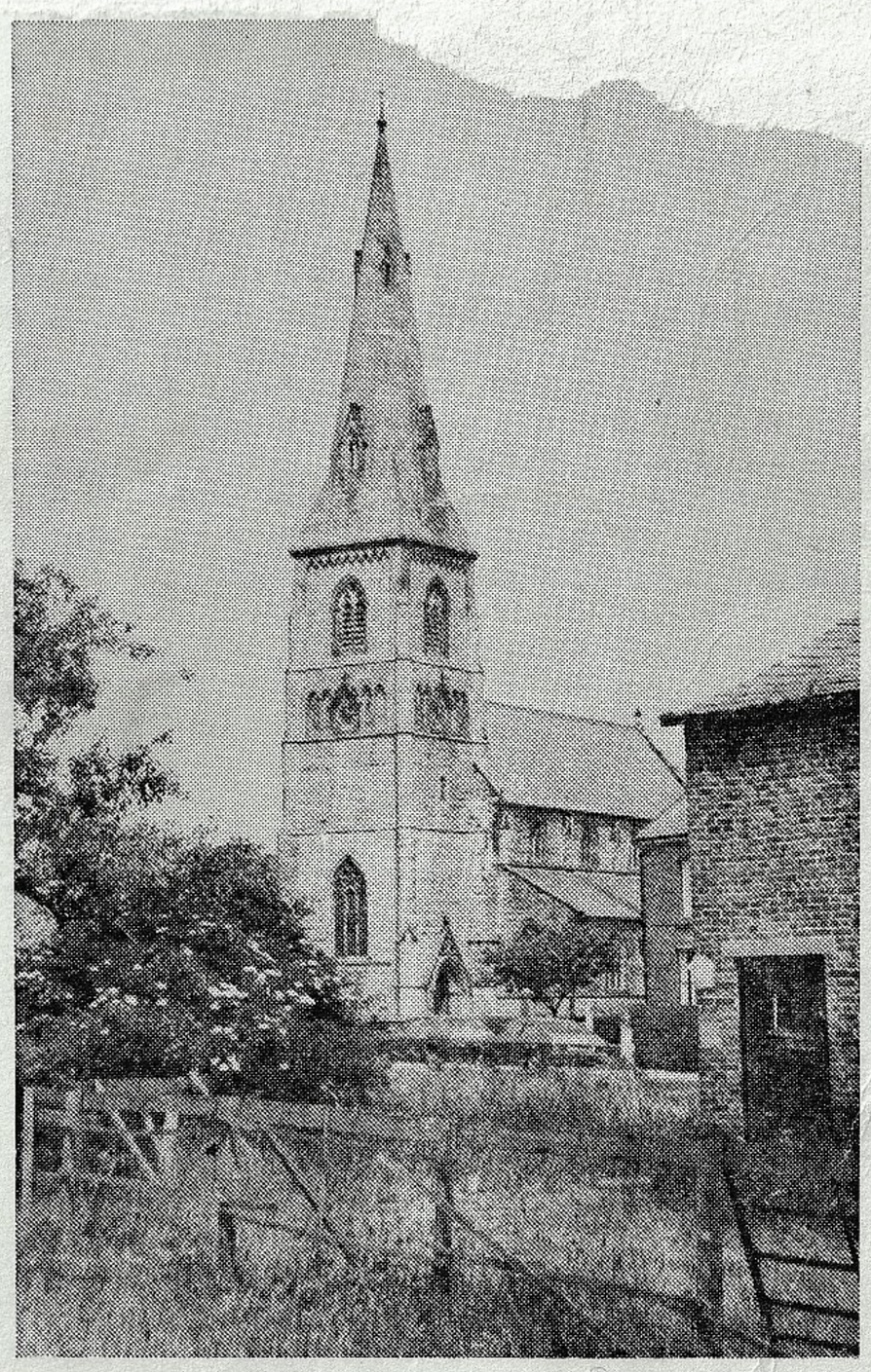
TARLETON

1975



PUBLISHED BY
TARLETON PARISH COUNCIL
PRINTED BY CROMPTON & LITTLE, SOUTHPORT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY T. H. TYRER

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In writing the forward to this guide which I do with pleasure, I am reminded of Jerrold's words "A blessed companion is a book." The Parish Council does not expect their efforts to win the Nobel Prize for literature but it has set out to produce a village guide which is useful, informative, readable and attractive.

A magazine such as this depends on three ingredients. The first is the willingness of the local businesses to advertise and so cover the production costs. The response as you will see has been almost 100% and I trust that you, the readers, will make use of the trades and services available in our village.

The second ingredient is the editorial matter and general contributions. As this is Heritage Year we decided that articles on Tarleton's long and varied history would be appropriate and we hope interesting. Our thanks are due to our contributors — all of whom put pen to paper willingly.

The third and most important section of any magazine is of course the reader. If after our editorial trials and tribulations we have managed to produce a readable magazine our efforts have not been in vain. As with confectionery the acid test is in the eating — have we succeeded or not. Your comments whether complimentary or otherwise will be appreciated.

In conclusion may I thank again all those who have been associated with this venture in any way for their help and support, and hope that my request for comments will not be confined just to the Tarleton Guide but will be forthcoming on any aspect of the village and its life.

L. CLAYTON,

Chairman —

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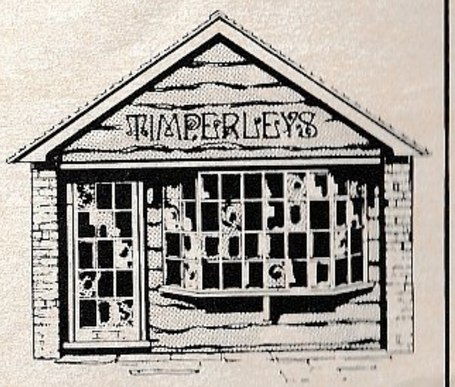

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And read of things that we have seen,
The village fete, the baby show,
To hear of friends we love and know
Of wedding bells and christenings too
The annual outing to the zoo,
The cricket match and bowling green
The Scout parade and Beauty Queen.

The Parish meetings, oh! how late,
Well! it takes time to put things right,
Some folks want this, and others that,
While wives just sit at home and wait.
Its great to have a magazine,
So send your news, but keep it clean
We may have heard it all before
But put in print we'll love it more.

by M. Taylor.
Mere Brow.

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TARLETON VILLAGE GUIDE

I was pleased to be asked to write a brief note for the magazine which the Tarleton Parish Council are producing for their residents.

As far as I know they are the first parish council in the District to attempt such a venture and I would commend them for their initiative. I say this because since local government was reorganised in April 1974 the local authorities which have been created are very much bigger in terms of both area and population than before and there is a very real danger in my view that because of its new enlarged size, local government at district level will become more and more remote from the people it exists to serve. Anything therefore that can be done to keep the ratepayers in touch with what their district and parish councils are doing, is to be commended and I sincerely hope that this new venture by the Tarleton Parish Council achieves the success which it undoubtedly deserves.

As most people will know, local government underwent a tremendous reorganisation with effect from the 1st April last year and Tarleton which formerly came under the West Lancashire Rural District Council, now falls within the area administered by the new West Lancashire District Council. The new Council covers an extremely large area indeed stretching from Hesketh Bank in the north to Bickerstaffe in the south and it includes the whole of the areas formerly administered by the Ormskirk and the Skelmersdale and Holland Urban District Councils, a large part of what was formerly the West Lancashire Rural District Council and a smaller part of the former Wigan Rural District Council. The very nature of the area, containing as it does large prime agricultural areas within which are many small village communities, the ancient market town of Ormskirk and the whole of the rapidly expanding new town of Skelmersdale, presents the new Council with a wide variety of problems because the needs of the area differ so widely.

Apart from the structural changes of reorganisation some very significant changes so far as functions also took place in April last year. The most important of these is probably in respect of planning and the District Council is now totally responsible for all local planning. The Tarleton Parish Council receive, as of right, details of all planning applications affecting the area and any comments which your Parish Council make are taken into account by the Planning Committee of the District Council before they reach a decision about individual applications. This is an important and welcome change because it ensures local views and opinions are available on all planning matters.

The first year since local government reorganisation has been an extremely difficult one which has imposed tremendous demands upon both members and officers in trying to resolve the very many problems which local government reorganisation created, whilst at the same time attempting to provide and maintain the services for which we are responsible. The situation has not been eased by the fact that reorganisation coincided with an unprecedented rise in the rate of inflation and the combination of these two events focused public attention on local government and what it was doing in a way which it has never done before. Local government can only be successful if there is a constant "feed-back" of views and opinions from the public to their councillors and officials. The process is a two way one however and so far as West Lancashire is concerned, we for our part are doing all that we can to inform ratepayers about what is happening and to consult and involve as far as possible. I see the Tarleton Village Guide as yet another vehicle in this continuing process.

JOHN COWDALL, Chief Executive Officer.

THE TOWNSHIP OF TARLETON

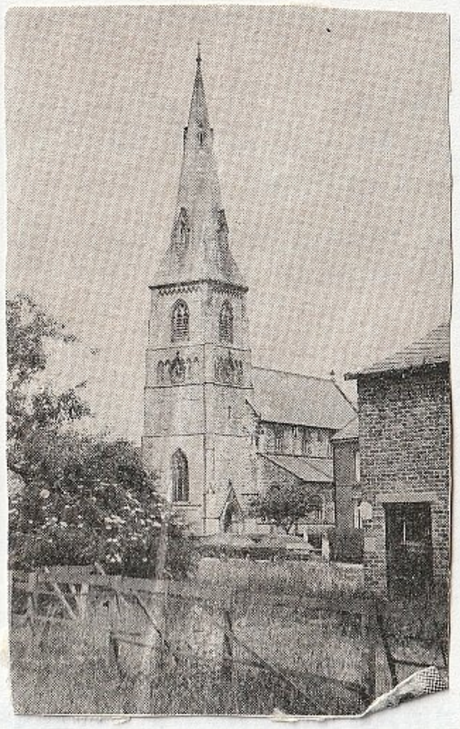
There has been a settlement here for many centuries and in 1246 was known as Tharilton. The much used A59 road cuts through the Parish to the east of the Village proper – a road used by coach travellers on their uncomfortable journeys from Liverpool to York, via Preston some 9 miles to the North. The River Douglas or Asland flowing north to the Ribble for some three miles, forms the Eastern Boundary. To the West, low lying areas stretch to reach the border of what was Martin Mere, long since drained. About a hundred years ago Tarleton was described as being a Township of some 1,800 people, (now over 4,000). That the soil was loam and moss overlaying clay. There were over 3,000 acres of arable land. Nearly 2,000 acres of permanent grass, and some 150 acres of woods and plantations.

In early times Tarleton formed part of Croston and its earliest description is an 'island' by the 'More of Croxton', that is, the Mere of Croston. In those days, of course, village life revolved around the Church, and this presented problems as the land was often flooded to a great extent and crossing the rivers Douglas and Yarrow to attend worship at Croston Church was difficult to say the least. An even earlier history of the Parish tells us that a Roger de Montegon gave the 'Island of Tarleton' to the monks of Thetford, but his brother Richard transferred it to the Abbey of Cockersands, near Lancaster.

Because of the difficulties in attending worship at Croston it was natural that a religious service be held in Tarleton. This took place at the Cross, the site of which could well be at the corner of Blackgate Lane opposite the Bank. There was also a Cross at Sollum, which was much fought over by the men of both areas, it often being carried away by Tarleton men only to be recovered by the residents of Sollum again. These predatory raids went on for some time and finally the Tarleton men threw it in a pond. The base however still remains.

On the site of what is now St. Mary's Church, a little distance from Bank Bridge, on the A59, there stood an ancient Chapel, known as St. Helens and about 1525 a priest named George Dandy, "founded a Chantry for his soul and all Christian souls". It is recorded that in 1530 a Robert Smith of Liverpool broke in and stole certain property. No doubt he was speedily dealt with.

Eventually the Chapel was sold to Sir Thomas Hesketh who at once pulled it down and Tarleton remained without a place of Worship until the time of the Commonwealth, when a small building was erected by the Presbyterians. At the Restoration it became Episcopal but was little used and went into ruin. In 1719 Mrs. Legh of Bank Hall gave and for the building of present day St. Mary's, for the worship of the Church of England. She and her heirs were to have the nomination of Curate, with the approbation of the Rector of Croston. There was no endowment at that time. The Patronage seems to have been acquired by the Rector absolutely, for in 1821 when Tarleton became an independent Parish the Rev'd Streynsham Master, the Rector, held it and gave it to his son. A small house in the Village, No. 42 Church Road was, in the 1700's, the Parsonage. It is there today,



bearing the inscription, "This house was built in A.D. 1726 for the Curate of Tarleton with Mrs. Margaret Thompsons legacy".

On the site of what is now a Bank, at the junction of Blackgate Lane and Church Road, a Grammar School was built in 1650. Here, at noon each day the pupils would be dismissed for lunch, with the command, 'Prandeamus', (let us dine). On the Thursday before Shrove Tuesday the pupils would bring contributions for the Master, and a raffle for fighting cocks would take place, which afterwards fought.

Some of the earliest names of residents of Tarleton include a Richard Sutton in 1444. A George Dandy in 1525, William Dandy in 1544. There was a Norris who visited Tarleton around 1664 and this gentleman could well be related to the Norris's of Speke Hall, Liverpool, who were constantly at odds with the Authorities of that period.

The Hearth Tax Returns of 1666 records 73 hearths, but only 3 dwellings had as many as 3 hearths. The Land Tax Return of 1798 shows also that the land was much divided, and a Charles Croft, a William Bamford, and the heirs of Peter Legh were among the chief contributors.

In 1700 a Thomas Fleetwood of Bank Hall obtained a Charter, for a peddling fair at Tarleton, which existed for nearly two centuries.

For its size Tarleton has held a colourful and interesting history. Many of the old properties have long since gone, but there are still a few, however, within the Parish, steeped in history and longing to tell a story. Long may they remain.

T. TYRER

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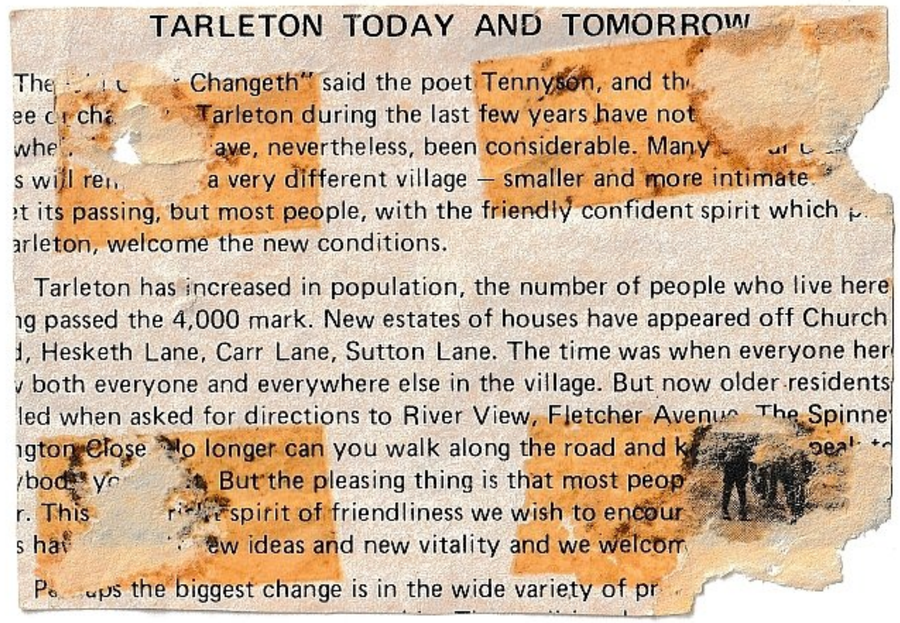
TARLETON TODAY AND TOMORROW



The [illegible] Changeth" said the poet Tennyson, and th[illegible]
ee [illegible] Tarleton during the last few years have not
whe[illegible] ave, nevertheless, been considerable. Many [illegible]
s will re[illegible] a very different village — smaller and more intimate
t its passing, but most people, with the friendly confident spirit which [illegible]
arleton, welcome the new conditions.

Tarleton has increased in population, the number of people who live here
ng passed the 4,000 mark. New estates of houses have appeared off Church
, Hesketh Lane, Carr Lane, Sutton Lane. The time was when everyone her
both everyone and everywhere else in the village. But now older residents
led when asked for directions to River View, Fletcher Avenue, The Spinne
gton Close [illegible] o longer can you walk along the road and k[illegible]
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Pe[illegible]aps the biggest change is in the wide variety of pr[illegible]

gardening and farming are still of great importance and large quantities of vegetables, tomatoes and lettuces go out to the hungry towns far around. Many workers still travel daily to the factories of Preston and Leyland. But we now have increasing numbers of businessmen, teachers, administrative and social workers. It must be a good thing for any community to have such a variety of people within it, and this is one of the encouraging features of Tarleton today.

At the same time new facilities continue to be rapidly developed. No longer do our residents need to travel elsewhere to buy anything. An extensive range of shops includes the latest fashions, everything for home handymen, undoubtedly the most beautiful display of furniture in the North-West, and (inevitably in these days!) a supermarket. This choice will be further increased by the five shops which form the first phase of the new development at the junction of Church Road and Gorse Lane. There will be nothing dull about this strikingly designed centre, with its different architectural styles from Tudor and Georgian to semi-Continental. There are more shops to come, a Clinic and Health Centre and — despite all financial cutbacks we still hope — a library.

At last the first off-street parking has been provided opposite the Church — inadequate admittedly, but a beginning. Eventually (inflation permitting) this area will be properly surfaced and the front portion landscaped. In the meantime the District Council is financing the erection of much-needed public conveniences. The Parish Council has recently acquired the building at the corner of Coe Lane. Soon this unsightly structure will be demolished, we hope, and the area landscaped with shrubs and seats.

Thus, a well-developed and convenient village centre is emerging, but at the same time praiseworthy efforts to retain the old charm and rural atmosphere are being made.

TARLETON YESTERDAY

TARLETON TODAY

Neither are the recreational needs of the increasing number of our young families being forgotten. The large new Playing Field in Carr Lane is already equipped with a children's playground, soon cricket and football pitches will be ready, and we have managed by strenuous efforts to persuade the District Council to make a grant of £6,000 for the erection of a pavilion and changing facilities. This field will meet a long-standing need which has been loudly demanded at annual Parish Meetings for years. The new Village Institute at Mere Brow — a most excellent community venture — and the considerably extended Bowling Club premises in Sutton Lane supply other needs. "Leisure Lakes" at Mere Brow provides marvellous amenities on our doorstep. These could be enjoyed by all if we could get an access constructed which would be adequate and no inconvenience to the villagers.

A larger population means not only more young, but also more older people. The District Council is planning a scheme of sheltered housing accommodation for elderly people on a site in Gorse Lane. This will be a high standard up-to-date development and its location is most suitable, being central for shops and other facilities. Administrative wheels often grind slowly, but we anticipate a start within a few months. The "Over-60's" Club in Tarleton and the "Autumn Club" in Mere Brow are wide-ranging, spritely and enthusiastic in their activities and are well supported.

To meet the more serious needs of the elderly there has been established the "Good Neighbours" Scheme with its large band of over 50 willing helpers. We are very proud of this scheme, especially as it was the first of its kind to be set up as a model for other schemes currently being put into operation in other parts of the County.

But to be complete, village life must embrace its educational and cultural side. In addition to first-class primary schools, educational provision in Tarleton reached its highest peak ever with the upgrading of the Secondary School in Hesketh Lane into a full Comprehensive High School. Its extensive new buildings and grounds compare favourably with any school for miles around. Fortunate indeed are our young people, but this school does not cater only for the young. On Winter evenings it buzzes with activity as an Evening Centre. Its intriguing range of classes and activities puts even neighbouring towns to shame and students travel out from the towns to us — a complete reversing of the traditional direction. This school is also the venue for the Summer Play Scheme which attracted between 600 and 700 children a day last year and is expected to do the same this year during the last week in July.

Tarleton today is, therefore, a pleasant place in which to live, to work and to play. We have our problems, of course. There are many untidy sites remaining and traffic congestion sometimes gives motorists ample time to sit and view them! As everywhere, traffic is a problem — the heavy traffic especially as it rumbles night and day along Hesketh Lane.

But the future for our village is full of hope. Our facilities are developing and we shall seek to cope with our problems. In the new Lancashire County Development Plan we are scheduled to become part of the Green Belt. This will

sent character. Probably the one disadvantage will be that those desiring to
d houses will find it difficult to obtain planning permission (as indeed some
e already ...nd.) Whilst it may be desirable to restrict further general deve-
ment, we all have to try to secure fair treatment for our own young people
hey get married and require homes of their own.

In Tarleton today and in the future, we must weld together two major asp
the one hand, we must retain our village atmosphere, our friendly togetherne
our long-standing traditions, such as the annual Walking Day and fair, whilst
other hand, we need to develop our amenities to a satisfactory level. Both of
e can be achieved, and at local level at least, we can look into the future with
fidence and optimism.

ROBERT HODGE.

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Is this the year of Heritage?

Is this the world God made for man?
Is this His own Almighty Plan?
Ah well! we know, the answer plain,
Man thinks he's fit to hold the rein,
In this enlightened day and age,
Is this the year of Heritage?

Let's think again, e'er its too late,
Sow seeds of love instead of hate,
Let's set our aims on higher things,
And not forget that prayer has wings,
Let God have sway, in this our age,
And great will be our Heritage.

by M. Taylor,
Mere Brow.

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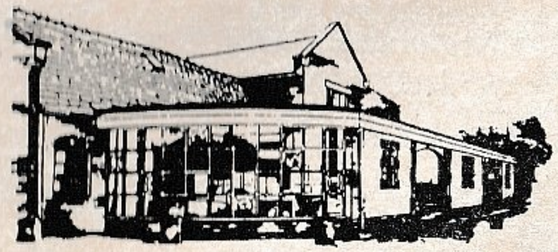

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Records of the Duchy Court at Lancaster show that in 1557 reference is made to the building of the Chapel of St. Helen by Richard Banastre, lord of the manor of Tarleton who died in 1548. This must have been the second or third chapel on the site of the present Old Church, since a land conveyance nearly two hundred years earlier refers to a piece of land 'between the town and the Chapel of St. Helen.' In fact, it was in the thirteenth century that the Pope's licence was granted to build the first Chapel of Ease 'for the ease of the inhabitants of the said manor being far distant from the parish church at Croston and often prevented by the rising of the great waters and rivers from going there.'

In 1557 one Henry Banastre, deposed that the chapel stood 'on or near the site of the present building, near to the well called St. Helen's Well.' Banastre sold the chapel and the site, at the time of the disolution of chantry chapels, to Sir Thomas Hesketh who 'quietly pulled it down.' From this period for the next hundred years or so, Tarleton was without a chapel.

In 1650 the Presbyterians, with the help of Hyett, the Puritan rector of Croston, built a meeting house at the end of Blackgate Lane, near the site of the present Bank. Cromwell's Commissioners visited the township at this time and recommended that Tarleton should become a separate parish and parish church built. Nothing came of these recommendations. The Chapel at the corner of Blackgate Lane fell into decay after being used spasmodically by Churchpeople and by Presbyterians.

The Bishop of Chester was petitioned in 1718 for a licence to erect a new Chapel on the site of the old St. Helens and this was dedicated to St. Mary-the-Virgin on the 24th July 1719. The Old Church remains as a magnificent example of the architecture of the period and the most historic building in Tarleton. It has hardly been changed by later restoration with the exception of the addition of the narthex in 1824.

Tarleton became a separate parish in 1821 and St. Mary's remained as the parish church until the completion of Holy Trinity which was consecrated by the Bishop of Manchester on the 7th June 1888.

A great deal more ought to be noted but space forbids. 'The hermits' of the chapel yard; the chantry priest; George Dandye with his stipend of £4-11s. a year; what happened to the chalice valued by the Tudor Commissioners at 3s-3d. ?

The cost of building Holy Trinity was £6,138. The steeple and bells £2,600. The repair of the steeple in 1968 cost £3,500 and that was before inflation REALLY gathered steam !

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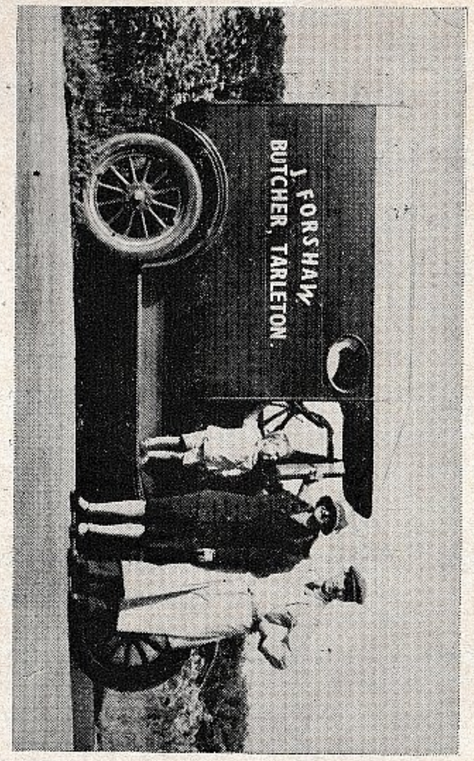

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THE GROWTH OF THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY IN TARLETON

The writer would like to express the thanks of the Tarleton Parish Council for much of the information that has been given by many retired horticulturists, also by the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, and last but not least to Mrs. B. Farrington, former grower and produce merchant who is now 90 years of age.

* * *

It was in the year 1894 that the first greenhouses were erected in Tarleton. Two were built at Windsor House, Hesketh Lane, by the late Mr. William Cookson (father of Charlie) and grandfather of the present nurseryman of the same address, Mr. W. Cookson. Two others were built in that same year also in Hesketh Lane for the late Mr. James Johnson, father of the late Mr. Alf Johnson, many people remember Alf as a sportsman on the cricket field. These were situated at the nursery which in later years was owned and worked by Mr. Richard Hickson, who is now retired, but who later in this story played no small part in the development and success of the horticultural industry of the village.

It was in approximately that same year, 1894, that a major revolution took place in the village, a public water supply was piped in, and although it was said that this new source of water supply was not received with enthusiasm by everyone, it must have been a great blessing to all. Perhaps more particularly to those who had to carry water, in some cases long distances from ponds and springs.

Incidentally, in passing it is said that it was due to the persistance of the late Archdeacon Fletcher (Rector) who was also a councillor, that Tarleton had mains water ahead of many other rural areas.

This new source of water supply was in no small measure instrumental in helping along the development of horticulture.

Only slowly at first did the new innovation proceed, with greenhouses going up in ones and two's, scattered about the village. No serious attempt has yet been made to start up on a real commercial basis.

One would assume that at this time, and perhaps into the early part of this century, these pockets of greenhouses were worked to supplement incomes, which must have been very low in those days. Many of us feel that inflation is something that has only just struck us, but how wrong we can be..

The following illustration was given by one of the oldest horticulturists in the village.

> At the turn of the century a 60ft x 12ft greenhouse could be built and heated for £20, yet by the mid 1930's this same area cost £60 for building and heating.

While on the subject of construction, it would be fair to say without doubt, that Henry Alty Ltd., were the pioneers of commercial greenhouse building in the village, heating was done mainly by the late James Bickerstaffe, later to become Henry Iddon & Sons of Station Bridge, Hesketh Bank.

One could say that there was no real major commercial expansion in the industry until after the first World War, although there had been a steady expansion of small units.

In the years between the wars, the glasshouse industry expanded and some fairly sizeable nurseries came into being.

Here again another revolution took place, instead of low type 12ft wide houses built on brick walls, there came what was known at the time as the aeroplane type of houses, built on wood, steel, or concrete pillars, a much higher type of house and linked to cover any desired area. This was a great step forward for not only did it give more height for plant growth, particularly tomatoes, but mechanical cultivators could now be used.

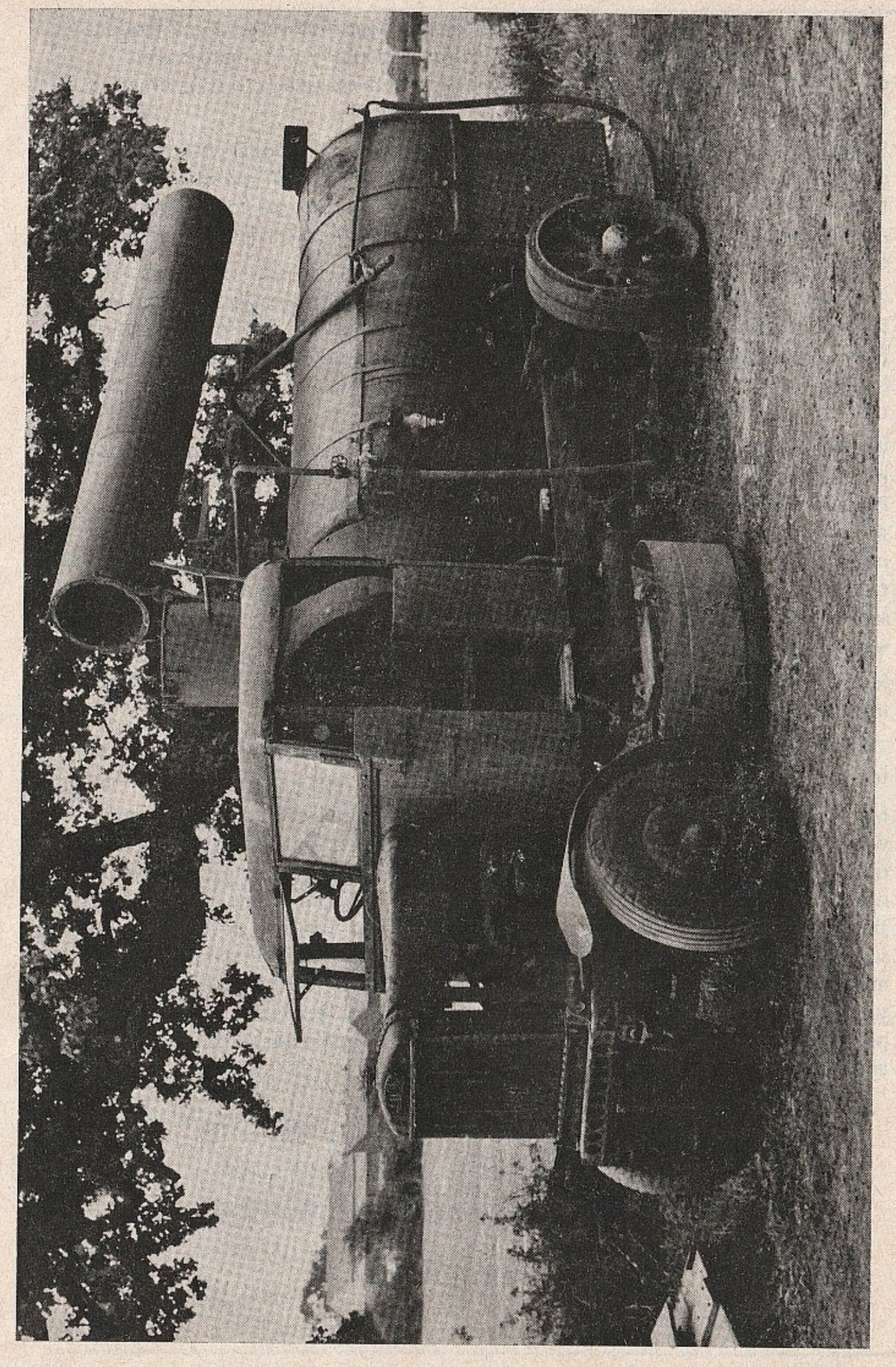
So the spade and the hard work that goes with it became less of a necessity and was perhaps used more in the front garden than the greenhouse. But as with all enterprises there comes setbacks, perhaps the greatest setback horticulture had between the mid twenties and mid thirties, was the poor prices for produce prevailing during that period, coupled with the dwindling production of crops, particularly tomatoes, due to a build-up of disease and pests, chiefly potato eelworm and to a lesser degree Root Knott eelworm.

Many methods had been tried to combat these problems but without any great success. Rotating of crops, i.e. growing of tomatoes one year and cucumbers the following made for some improvement, but after a while this failed and the build-up of these pests went on unabated. Quite a number of chemical forms of sterilization were being introduced at this time, some gave an improvement in the not so heavily infected houses, but by and large the crops got steadily worse. With the poor and uncertain prices for produce many nurserymen were having to lay off men, and in some cases were considering getting out of the industry themselves, and going and finding other means of earning a living. Then suddenly out of the blue as it were, came the salvation of this depressed industry. "Soil sterilization by steam injection". Mr. John Jackson, Sen., then of Nursery Drive and Mr. Richard Hickson, mentioned earlier, heard of a steam boiler for sale at a works for the sum of £40. So with £20 each which they both admit they could ill afford, they bought the boiler.

So in 1936 came the innovation that was to bring the greatest improvement in glasshouse crops up to that time.

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Hickson sterilized all their houses on the two nurseries with this new method of steam injection, the results were marvellous crops of tomatoes, such as had never been seen produced in Tarleton before. Market gardeners came from far and near to see this new form of soil sterilization. With these startling results growers were satisfied that this was the answer to their problems from a growing point of view.

As a result many growers were seeking the services of Mr. Jackson who had now bought a much larger boiler and put it on the chassis of a Leyland waggon, so as to transport it from one nursery to another, thus becoming a Steam Sterilizing Contractor as well as a market gardener. Indeed he eventually had a fleet of four boilers serving a wide area of Lancashire as well as the Tarleton growers.



Mr. J. JACKSON'S 1917 G. MODEL LEYLAND CHASSIS

It was important too, that this improved method was discovered and introduced prior to World War Two, the increased yields particularly of tomatoes were greatly appreciated when no supplies were available elsewhere to supplement our food in Britain.

Some of the larger growers eventually got their own steam boilers but as the area of glass increased so all boilers were kept busy during the winter months. Incidentally, the early boilers were fired by coal, then it was found that gas coke was much cleaner and was used for many years. Finally this was superseded by oil firing, as is done at the present time.

This was not to be the end of the road as far as steam sterilization was concerned for John Jackson 20 years later invented and patented the Jackson Automatic Steaming System, which cut down the work to a minimum, and became known locally as the steam flow. It must be said however, that this invention was only of use for large areas of glass houses.

We have written of several aspects of horticulture, but as yet said nothing about marketing of produce. In the early days, most of it went into local markets, Preston, Blackburn, Bolton and probably a few others. Many local growers sent their produce, tomatoes, cucumbers etc. by market carriers and then followed on by train to set out their stalls on the market. We often think of the pre-packing of horticultural produce as a modern innovation, yet 40 years ago all tomatoes sent to markets were weighed and packed in one pound bags.

This of course was discontinued as the area of glass increased. A new type of glass house emerged in the early 1960's, known as Dutch lights giving a greater light intensity due to the much larger panes of glass.

The area of glass in the Tarleton area is now 51.4 acres and produce is dispatched to many of the principle cities of Great Britain.

Many new techniques have been introduced during the last 20 years, automatic watering, overhead spray lines, temperature controlled vent lifting gear, and many other technical methods too numerous to mention. Yet in spite of all these innovations there still remains one dark blot of the horizon. Rising costs of production. Market gardeners are producing perishable food, which is at the mercy of supply and demand and for which it is difficult to have a fixed and profitable price at all times. The horticulturists of Tarleton have overcome the trials and misfortunes of the past, and we believe that given a fair deal in relation to imported produce, they have the ingenuity and know-how to make horticulture a successful and viable industry once again.

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SNIPPETS

1. Is it a record? Since 1895 there have been only three Parish Council Clerks, Mr. S. S. Howard served from 1895 to 1921, Mr. R. Tindsley from 1921 to 1952, and the present Clerk, J. H. Edmondson, still going strong with twenty three years to date.

* * *

2. The first Precept for the Village amounted to £25 in 1895. Thirty-two years later it was still £25. In 1974 it was £5,500.

* * *

3. The first Chairman of the Parish Council was the Rev'd. R. C. Fletcher, later Archdeacon. He served as Chairman for thirteen consecutive years, and was also a County Alderman and District Councillor. Robert Latham, J.P. served as Chairman, continuously, for over thirty-five years, and was also Chairman of the Rural District Council.

* * *

4. In 1913 the Parish Council resolved to write to a certain Doctor drawing his attention to "the excessive speed with which he drives his motor propelled vehicle through the Parish and adjoining district to the great danger and annoyance of the residents."

* * *

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TARLETON METHODIST CHURCH [illegible]

According to tradition organised Methodism in Tarleton began in the early 19th Century when a small group began to meet for worship and prayer in the barn of a farm at Sollom as well as in house groups. The first Church of brick was erected on the south-side of the present premises on land which now forms the front gardens of the row of cottages known as 'Wesleyan Cottages,' which incidentally were built out of the brick of the old Chapel when it was demolished; hence the plaque bearing the words "Wesleyan Cottages" on the front wall of the end pair.

The "Old Chapel", according to some of the oldest Tarleton Methodists had box type pews with doors, and a balcony at the back, and was heated by a large stove in the centre of the floor, not unlike the inside of the old Parish Church of St. [illegible].

To this "Old Chapel" there was added, on the north side, the present schoolroom in 1886 and ten years later in 1896 the "New Chapel" was built. In 1933 some major extension work was carried out when several new classrooms and meeting rooms on two floors were added plus a connecting hallway to join the schoolroom to the Chapel. These extensions were opened by the Rev. A. Price Hughes, a famous Methodist minister and preacher of that time.

Thus the present church buildings exist, offering seating accommodation for approx. 250 people and facilities which are the envy of most churches in the district. Tarleton Methodist Church is still an integral part of the Ormskirk Methodist Circuit, being the Church with the largest membership in the Croston Section under its present sectional-minister, the Rev. Jim Ireland.

The Church has 120 full members with many adherent families and friends and in Feb. 1972 became a Christian Stewardship Church after a 3 weeks fully conducted campaign by the Methodist Stewardship Organisation. It offers Public Worship on Sundays. Morning at 10.30 a.m. is Family Church and Sunday School with the thriving Primary and Junior Departments leaving the adult Church after the opening devotions for their classes in the school. At 6.30 p.m. there is again Divine Worship. During the Autumn and Winter months the Tarleton Methodist Church affords a wide range of Christian fellowships both for young and old:—

Young Wives' Fellowship	1st Monday Evening in the month.
Mens Fellowship	Tuesday Evenings — fortnightly.
Ladies' Bright Hour	Wednesday Afternoons — fortnightly.
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House Group for Prayer and Bible Study	Wednesday Evenings — weekly.
Choir Practice	Wednesday Evenings — weekly.

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August 1975.

TARLETON ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church in Tarleton, dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians, has made interesting progress both spiritually and statistically over the past 50 years.

In 1925, a Chapel of Ease to St. Oswalds, Longton, was opened at Tarleton. The first Mass – attended by 19 people, one a baby of about 12 months – was celebrated in a loft over a stable on property in Hesketh Lane. For a number of years Mass was available to Parishioners only once a month under a Caretaking arrangement between St. Oswalds, Longton, and St. Patricks, Marshside. Between 1934 - 1942, the oratory was transferred from the loft to the ground floor of the stable.

In 1942, the Mission received its first Resident Priest, to be followed shortly in 1944, by the Priest appointed to Our Lady's who was subsequently proved to be a man with much vision and faith. Fr. Francis Harvey, together with a great deal of energy, enthusiasm and a willing band of Parishioners (72 in 1944) saw in 1951 the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the present Church, Presbytery and Modern Hall.

The Parish now has a total in excess of 600 Parishioners. A Junior School is envisaged in the near future.

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TARLETON FIRE SERVICE

A Fire Station was started in Tarleton in the 1900's when piped water came to Tarleton. The first type of fire-fighting equipment was a hand-cart with a number of hoses, a standpipe and branches. The Fire Station as such was a wooden cabin in "The Pinfold" council yard in Church Road near to what is now the Over 60's Club. The Station remained there for a number of years and was subsequently moved to Mr. Robert Lathom's Yard in Church Road, Tarleton.

In 1938/39 when West Lancashire Council formed the Auxiliary Fire Service with sixteen men the Fire Station was again moved to the top of Plox Brow, Tarleton. The fire-fighting equipment at this time was a "Standard Gwyn" trailer pump and as the Firemen had no means of pulling it they went to the villagers for donations. These were readily given and a Vauxhall car was purchased to pull the trailer pump.

The first organised training the firemen were given was from a Leading Fireman Twist from Ormskirk Fire Station, and the first big fire the men had to tackle was a dutch barn at Plox Brow.

During the period of the war air raids, when Mr. Harry Hodge was in charge as Patrol Officer, Firemen from Tarleton were sent to help at Maghull and Liverpool. By this time Sub Stations had been formed at Mere Brow, Holmeswood and Hesketh Lane with the junction of Moss Lane. These three stations also had Trailer Pumps and cars to pull them.

During 1940 a new Station was built in Hesketh Lane and was opened in late 1942. This was a three-bay Station with watch room and stores. A recreation hut was also provided. This hut was used for sleeping purposes during the war as two fire engines were manned from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. When this Station was opened Mere Brow, Holmeswood and Hesketh Lane Fire Stations were closed and amalgamated with Tarleton. This brought the complement of men to forty Firemen and fifteen Firewomen with Mr. Harry Hodge was Company Officer in Charge. This way of life continued until the end of the war when there was talk of the Fire Station closing. Mr. Hodge pointed out to the "powers that be" that Tarleton was midway between Preston, Southport and Ormskirk and was ideally situated to cover a large area. After much negotiation the Fire Station was given a reprieve and in 1948 was taken over by the Lancashire County Fire Brigade, who recruited Retained Firemen to man the fire engine when a fire occurred. Once the alarm had been given Mr. Hodge (who has now retired from the Fire Service) was telephoned from Headquarters and he immediately ran to the Fire Station to put the siren on to call the men in.

Mr. John Johnson was appointed Sub-Officer in Charge with twelve Firemen, but Mr. Hodge continued to operate the siren until 1950 when call bells were fitted in the Firemen's houses and operated by Sub-Officer Johnson from his home. This system continued until 1955 when the whole system was remote controlled from Southport.

In 1953 an Auxiliary Fire Service complement of approximately eight men was formed and although these men were volunteers they turned out to fires with the Retained men but in their own green machine. On Home Office instructions the Auxiliary Fire Service was disbanded in 1967.

In 1961, 1962 and 1963 the Tarleton Firemen won the Lancashire County Fire Brigade Major Pump competition drills which was a real feather in their caps.

In 1963 Sub Officer Johnson retired and Mr. Ernie Nicholson was promoted to Sub Officer in Charge.

To the delight of Sub Officer Nicholson and the Firemen a new Bedford Water Tender Fire Engine was given to them in 1966 and is still "on the run" at the Station.

In August 1968 the Fire Station was pulled down and a temporary Station was made at Cheetham's Garage, Hesketh Lane, Tarleton. The present Fire Station, which was officially opened in June 1970, comprises one appliance bay, control room, lecture room, equipment store and bathroom with shower.

The call-out system has now been brought up-to-date with battery operated pocket alerters which the men carry with them all day. These are re-charged at the Firemen's houses each night and can operate whilst on charge.

At the end of March 1974 Sub Officer Nicholson retired and Leading Fireman John Ward was promoted to Sub Officer in Charge.

J. WARD.

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THE INSCRIPTION H L 1640 IS ABOVE THE ABOVE

THE LEADBETTER LEGACIES

Some two hundred yards or so south of the old Turnpike, now called Windgate Corner, one can see over the entrance of the Rams Head on a simple stone the inscription H L 1640. The date indicates when this fine old Farm - Coaching Inn was built. The same year Henry Leadbetter, Yeoman Farmer, of Tarleton, married Mary Sutch, of Burscough. Seventy four years later when extensions were being made at the Inn, a stone was laid in the wall of the outbuildings bearing the information H L 1714. This was the period when Henry Leadbetter, grandson of the former, married Ursula Hesketh, daughter of Rodger and Mary Hesketh, of Meols Hall, Churchtown. This remarkable co-incidence leads many to believe that the Leadbetters were not only connected with the building of the Inn, but lived there for some considerable time.

A daughter born to Henry and Ursula was christened Hannah Leadbetter, and it is with these two ladies that the story is mainly concerned. Ursula outlived her daughter. In a Will dated the 13th April 1757, Hannah left to the Churchwardens two parcels of land in Becconsall Marsh, (now called Hesketh Marsh). The rents of which had to be distributed to the poor of Tarleton. This became known as The Poor Cloth Charity. Permission was given later by The Charity Commissioners to give coal instead of cloth. At the present time cash is dispensed to the residents of Tarleton, who are within a certain income bracket.

Ursula died in 1766 when she was 86 years old. Four years previously she had made a Will, in which she left to The Rev. Robert Masters, Rector of Croston, William Bamford and Hugh Smith of Tarleton, money for the education of poor children in the village of Tarleton. In 1763 she revoked this, and made another one in which she left to The Officiating Minister of The Chapel at Tarleton, and The Overseers of the Poor, a sum of money upon trust, that they and their successors, should pay and apply the yearly interest for ever, in teaching and instructing six such children as they should think fit and proper at Tarleton School. The Trustees with the money received purchased land at Bank Bridge, and administered the Trust as instructed by the Will. Later on a portion of the land was sold to The Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company, to be used as a Coal Wharf. (The Trustees of the period were severely criticised by the villagers for this). In 1835 - 37 three cottages were erected on the remaining land. These are still controlled by the present Trustees.

With the abolition of fee paying in Primary Schools the Trust had to be changed. Financial assistance was then given to children attending Grammar Schools. Choice of scholars to benefit was determined by the Tarleton Scholarship Examinations. When the policy on secondary education was altered, a further modification of the scheme had to be made. The present position is that sums of money are given to the Tarleton C of E Primary Schools, to be spent on things for the children which the educational authorities do not necessarily provide.

The marriage of Henry Leadbetter and Ursula Hesketh poses many exciting questions. For instance, was this union the beginning of the association which took the Meols Hall family and the Leadbetters to Fleetwood to develop the fishing port? Are the Leadbetters of Fleetwood, many of whom became coxwains of the Fleetwood Lifeboat, decendants of this Tarleton family? And, why was one of the children of Henry and Ursula, born in Tarleton, christened fleetwood leadbetter? Limited space deny's the opportunity to tell the full story. Other points of interest are:

The writer of this article married Mary Leadbetter, namesake of the last child of Henry and Ursula, who was born a few weeks after the death of Henry Leadbetter in 1758. The Headmaster of the old boy's school (This building even though altered from the original is the Tarleton branch offices of The National Westminster Bank, which is on the corner of Blackgate Lane, Tarleton,) was Robert Leadbetter, brother-in-law of Ursula Leadbetter.

This article in the Tarleton Brochure to commemorate Heritage Year, affords The Trustees and I as their Chairman the opportunity to record our appreciation, and say thank-you to Ursula and Hannah Leadbetter.

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SNIPPETS, continued.

5. Years ago if a Parish Councillor resigned, or died, his successor accepted the nomination in the former's home. 'That's as close as one could come to filling another's shoes' !

* * *

6. Rats and sparrows were quite topical in the 1900's. The Parish Council made a payment of 5/6d. (27½ pence), for a number of rats tails and sparrows heads. However, in 1920 the Council decided that the destruction of rats and sparrows be discontinued as the County Council would accept responsibility.

* * *

7. The iron rail fencing around the Car Park in Church Road cost £14.25 pence when it was erected in 1932.

* * *

8. An Auction of Council property realised the following in 1932 :—

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He requires courage, patience, pluck, to move and draw a heavy load, and pull again and again if required, until he stirs the inert mass. The beauty of the Shire Horse depends not only on quality and symmetry, but on a sort of elephantine ponderosity that bespeaks power in every muscle and every limb.

(Livestock in Health and Disease – edited Prof. J. Prince – Sheldon)

Records show that the Shire Horse is a direct decendant of the Great Horse or War Horse as used by our forefathers in the pursuits of war.

Various Acts of Parliament and legislation throughout the centuries, together with the skill and determination of the horse-breeders, have ensured the survival of this great animal.

In 1878 the English Cart Horse Society was formed and in 1884 was re-named The Shire Horse Society which exists to this present day.

In our own Parish of Tarleton, the heavy horse played a very important role in supporting the various needs of village life.

His primary use in this area, was, of course, in agriculture. The horse would be working in the fields all day and then early the next morning he would be required to deliver the produce to the local market. The journey to Preston would take about 3 hours and so the carter would leave Tarleton at about 2 a.m. to be in time for the opening of the market.

It is not difficult to imagine how dangerous it must have been for the horse and the carter, particularly in wintertime with ice and snow on the ground, to negotiate the slope of Penwortham Brow, with the weight of a loaded cart behind, and a braking system far below today's Ministry of Transport standards.

At the beginning of this Century the Tarleton Branch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal was a vital link in the life-line of this community. The powerful Shire horses hauled the barges loaded with various goods coming in from the industrial towns. At this time there was a branch line from Hesketh Bank Railway Station linking up with the Canal at Tarleton. Here again, the horse provided the necessary power.

Coal came in via the Canal from Wigan and also, by road from Eccleston.

Some of the older readers may recall the owner of a rather lively horse, who offered to collect and deliver one ton of the best coal from Eccleston for the sum of ten shillings, hoping that this strenuous journey would reduce the animal's high spirits.

For the housewife of this past era, with no public transport as we understand it today, the highlight of the week must surely have been the arrival of the horse-drawn lorry from Bretherton, on its weekly run to Ormskirk Market.

One of the main events of the Year must have been the Annual Show at Mere Brow. In some of the earliest Shire Horse Society Stud Books, records can be found of local prizewinners, e.g.

1888	Tarleton Jumbo	1st Prize at Mere Brow.
1890	Tarleton King	1st Prize at Mere Brow.

It becomes obvious that the strength and stamina of the heavy horses and their contribution to the community, greatly improved the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Tarleton.

For work done and services rendered, these great animals have earned a place in our history.

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COE LANE AND POINTS EAST

Travellers between Preston and Southport on the A59 road pass over Bank Bridge formerly Tarleton Bridge and take the rise to pass the old Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the left. Opposite the Church and linking the main road to the village of Tarleton is Coe Lane. Still attractive with arable grazing land on either side, Coe Lane was once a delightful winding lane much used by the horse and cart and for family walks on Sundays. But, with the introduction of the internal combustion engine, the horse and cart has almost disappeared to give way to motor transport and tractors. Whereas the produce from the fertile fields of Tarleton used to be hauled to Preston, Ormskirk and Wigan markets by teams of Shire horses, heavy lorries now do the same job.

At the village end of Coe Lane, as the traveller turns left into the village, there used to be Manor Farm – which has recently been taken over as estate office buildings and beautifully renovated – but it is by turning **right** that one is led into Plox Brow and into an area that provides some of the more interesting history of Tarleton. Apart from the attractive old farms and cottages at the end of the Brow, where the land levels off, is the Leeds & Liverpool Canal running alongside the River Douglas or Asland. This stretch of canal and river from Bank Bridge to the spot where they merge via a solid lock about half a mile away towards Hesketh Bank, is a source of interest.

Going back as far as 1720, after considerable opposition by Parliament, local land owners, farmers, established merchants of Wigan and Ormskirk, authorized Thomas Stears, an engineer, and William Squires, a businessman, to make the River Douglas (alias Asland) navigable from the River Estuary to Miry Lane End at Wigan (shades of Wigan Pier). The intention was to carry coal from Wigan to the Estuary. By 1740 coal and stone were regular cargoes. Later The Douglas was replaced by the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, artificially cut, but no doubt, the old navigation route had provided a well established foundation for trade . . .

The cutting of the canal was an arduous and dangerous job undertaken by hundreds of Irish labourers – many lives being lost through a mixture of drinking bouts, brawls, drowning and disease – and many lived rough around Plox Brow. As they were mostly Catholics and the nearest Catholic Church being at Croston there must be quite a few unofficial old burial places around.

Pilfering was a curse of canal carrying – loaded vessels were covered, chained up and sealed, part of the seal was sent to the destination and was matched up with the part left on, on arrival. Unfortunately Police were at that time not as we know them to-day. To combat robbery and violence the job fell to one man known as the Parish Constable and chosen by the Parish Council. He was untrained – unpaid – and had to bear the responsibility armed only with a wooden staff – usually he was jeered at – especially by the tough navvies. It was supposed to be the rule that every citizen was to render assistance to the Parish Constable whenever it was required, BUT when needed there was a noticeable lack of volunteers. As a result no one wanted to be chosen for the job – but if he refused to accept – he was fined £10 and placed in the stocks. Consequently crimes were frequent and undetected.

Later, around 1839, the Police Force was formed by Sir Robert Peel. The men wore white trousers, tail coats, tall hats lined with leather, carried a 14 inch staff or baton and usually were referred to as Peelers or Bobbies.

A force of one sergeant and one policeman would patrol quite a large beat (often pelted with rotten eggs and beaten up by villains) for the princely sum of about 15 shillings a week. A policeman's lot was not a happy one. Tarleton at one time was policed from Croston — the population being much smaller than it is now. Tarleton got its own policeman — efficient — a friend in need, acknowledged by everyone. Patting small boys on the head (knowing that the bulge under their caps were stolen birds eggs) and giving a deserving whack to those who strayed too near to the river and canal.

Quite recently there was a Dinghy race from Burscough along the canal terminating near Plox Brow. A gay scene of marquees, streamers, coloured dinghys of all shapes and sizes. The loudspeakers bellowing forth the witty remarks of the commentator. Strains of 'Life on the Ocean Wave' alternating with 'Rule Britannia' as each winner approached. A Panda patrol car keeping an eye on the traffic.

An endearing and astonishing scene to any ghosts of Irish navvies who happened to be around —

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SNIPPETS, continued.

9. Five of the twelve Parish Councillors' surnames begin with the letter C. — Clayton, Caunce, Clague, Carman and Corbishley. A nap hand, could it be said?

* * * * *

10. In 1934 the rate in the pound for Tarleton was 9 pence.

* * * * *

11. The Parish Council in 1935 were considering a request that Council house rents in Tarleton be reduced from 29 pence to 21 pence a week.

* * * * *

12. Church Road did not get its name officially until 1935. Before that it was simply known as the Village.

* * * * *

13. In 1898 Whiston Parish Council requested support from Tarleton Council to have lighting made compulsory for motor vehicles. On that occasion, however, Tarleton Council felt there were too many difficulties with regard to its adoption and were unable, therefore, to support the request for the present!

* * * * *

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'SUTTONS', 26 Blackgate Lane, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2288.
WEST LANCS. AUTO., 82 The Gravel, Mere Brow, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2018.
WINDGATE GARAGE, Windgate, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2334.

GARDEN CENTRES
DUNSCAR NURSERIES, Southport New Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2684.

GREENGROCERS
WILLIAMSONS, Rock Dene Nurseries, Southport New Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2297.
R. COOKSON & SONS, 295 Hesketh Lane, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2509.
R. SUTTON, 173 Southport New Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2584.
J. WRIGHT, 154 Southport New Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 3282/2262.

GROCERS
T. ASHCROFT & SONS, Mere Brow, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2256.
BOND & MARSH, 1 Station Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 3614.
M. & F. TIMPERLEY, 53, Church Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2276.
K. E. WILSON, 79 Church Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B.

HAIRDRESSERS – LADIES
JOANS, 91 Church Road, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2733.
MAUREENS HAIR FASHIONS, 8 Station Road, Hesketh Bank. Tel. H.B. 3608.

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R. W. MORRIS, Hesketh Lane, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2394/3471.

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J. T. SUTTON, "Glenwood", Marsh Lane, Mere Brow, Tarleton. Tel. Rufford 491.

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MERE BROW & DISTRICT INSTITUTE, The Gravel, Mere Brow. Tel. H.B. 3516.

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BECCONSALL BROTHERS, 212 Carr Lane, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 3343.
D. M. FARRELL, 4 Napier Avenue, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2079.
GRIFFITHS & BLUNDELL, 277 Hesketh Lane, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 3189.
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BRIAR DENE KINDERGATEN SCHOOL, 2 Fulwood Avenue, Tarleton.
Tel. H.B. 2531.

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K. WAREING, 11 Merlecrest Drive, Tarleton. Tel. H.B. 2830.
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THE TAYLOR SCHOOL OF DANCING, Tarleton Over 60's Club, Church Road, Tarleton.

SCHOOL OF MOTORING

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